WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Mining of uranium

1397. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that some organizations and locals are protesting against mining of uranium by Uranium Corporations of India Ltd., in Jharkhand and several other States;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main issues of concern expressed are:

(i) Demand for employment to locals

(ii) Alienation of Land

(iii) Perceived Health Hazards.

(c) The following steps have been initiated to address the issues:

(i) Employment is provided to land oustees as per UCIL's R&R policy duly approved by the Board.

(ii) Land is being acquired through concerned State Government Authorities and compensation for the same is being paid as per the rate fixed by them.

(iii) Various Awarness Campaigns are being carried out by UCIL to dispel misconceptions on health hazards. Safety and other aspects of mining are monitored by various Statutory Authorities such as the State Pollution Control Board, Directorate General of Mines Safety and Atomic Energy Regulatory Board.

Production of atomic energy using thorium

†1398. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the technology discovered for producing atomic energy on the basis of use of thorium in the world has been successful;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantum of electricity likely to be produced by using thorium available in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India has formulated a three stage nuclear power programme to optimally use its

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

modest uranium and vast thorium resources. Large scale thorium utilization is contemplated in the third stage of this programme , where uranium-233 bred in Fast Breeder Reactors of the second stage, will be used together with thorium.

The government has taken a number of steps to develop appropriate technologies for the utilization of thorium. A few of the major steps are:

(1) Setting up the research reactor Kamini at Kalpakkam using Uranium-233 fuel obtained from irradiated thorium. The reactor has been operating since 1997. The fuel for the reactor is bred, reprocessed and fabricated indigenously.

(2) Irradiation of thorium fuel bundles in research reactor at Trombay and in Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) has been carried out.

(3) Design and development of Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) using thorium based fuel. This reactor will serve as a technology demonstrator.

(c) Around 2,00,000 GW-yr electricity potential exists in India using domestic thorium through the route of breeder technology.

Supply of uranium

†1399. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has held discussions with the countries other than the countries of World's non-atomic supply group for the supply of uranium;

(b) if so, the names of these countries; and

(c) the reaction of these countries with regard to the supply of uranium?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) to (c) The Government is examining all possibilities of accessing uranium with potential partners. However a change in terms of opening of international civil nuclear cooperation with India would be necessary to realize such a possibility.

Atomic power plants in Rajasthan

1400. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals to set up new atomic power plants in Rajasthan;

(b) what would be their production capacity;

(c) the quantum of power to be provided to the State from these plants;

(d) by when it would be possible; and

(e) what would be its cost?

† *Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.*